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# **News Release**

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## **VA Expands Service in Arkansas by Opening New Clinic *Peake: World-Class Health Care Brought Closer to More Veterans***

WASHINGTON – To provide world-class health care closer to where more Arkansas veterans live, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs today announced plans to open a new community-based clinic in Phillips County.

“VA has established itself as one of the top health care organizations in the country,” said the Dr. James B. Peake, Secretary of Veterans Affairs. “By putting health care facilities in more communities, we’re enhancing veterans’ access to VA’s world-class health care.”

The new Arkansas facility is among 14 new community clinics in seven states that were announced by Peake.

“Community-based medicine enhances preventative care, allows for closer doctor-patient relationships and makes it easier for follow-up for people with chronic problems,” said Dr. Michael Kussman, VA’s Under Secretary for Health.

In Arkansas, VA spent nearly \$1.2 billion last year to serve the state’s 262,000 veterans. VA operates two major medical centers, nine outpatient clinics, one nursing home and one vet center in the state.

With 153 hospitals and more than 700 community-based clinics, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has the largest integrated health care system in the country. VA’s health care budget of more than \$40 billion this year will provide health care to about 5.8 million people during nearly 850,000 hospitalizations and more than 70 million outpatient visits.

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“Community-based medicine is better medicine,” said Kussman. “It makes preventative care easier for patients, helps doctors have closer relationships with their patients and permits easier follow-up for patients with chronic health problems.”

The new clinics are scheduled to activate in FY 2008 and are designated as priorities under VA’s Capital Asset Realignment for Enhanced Services (CARES) plan. CARES, completed in 2004, was intended to ensure that VA uses its resources as effectively and efficiently as possible.

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